AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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The Nawab's Diwan

and Other Tamil Tales

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The Nawab's Diwan and Other Tamil Tales

Written in 1879, *Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram* is the first novel in Tamil, the oldest of the Dravidian group of Indian languages.

Veda Nayakam Pillai (1826-1889) of Maayooram (Mayiladuthurai of today) in Tiruchi district was born in a Christian family. He worked as munsif in various parts of the district. Pillai who was widely read in European literature was eager from his youthful days to introduce the novel in Tamil. The result was *Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram* which continues to be read and appreciated by Tamil speaking people to this day.

In this Amar Chitra Katha, we have retold the fascinating story of Pratapa's grandfather, followed by the story of his childhood friend Kanakan. The story of Pratapa has been retold in the companion Amar Chitra Katha Volume—*The Adventures of Pratapan.*

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THE NAWAB'S DIWAN

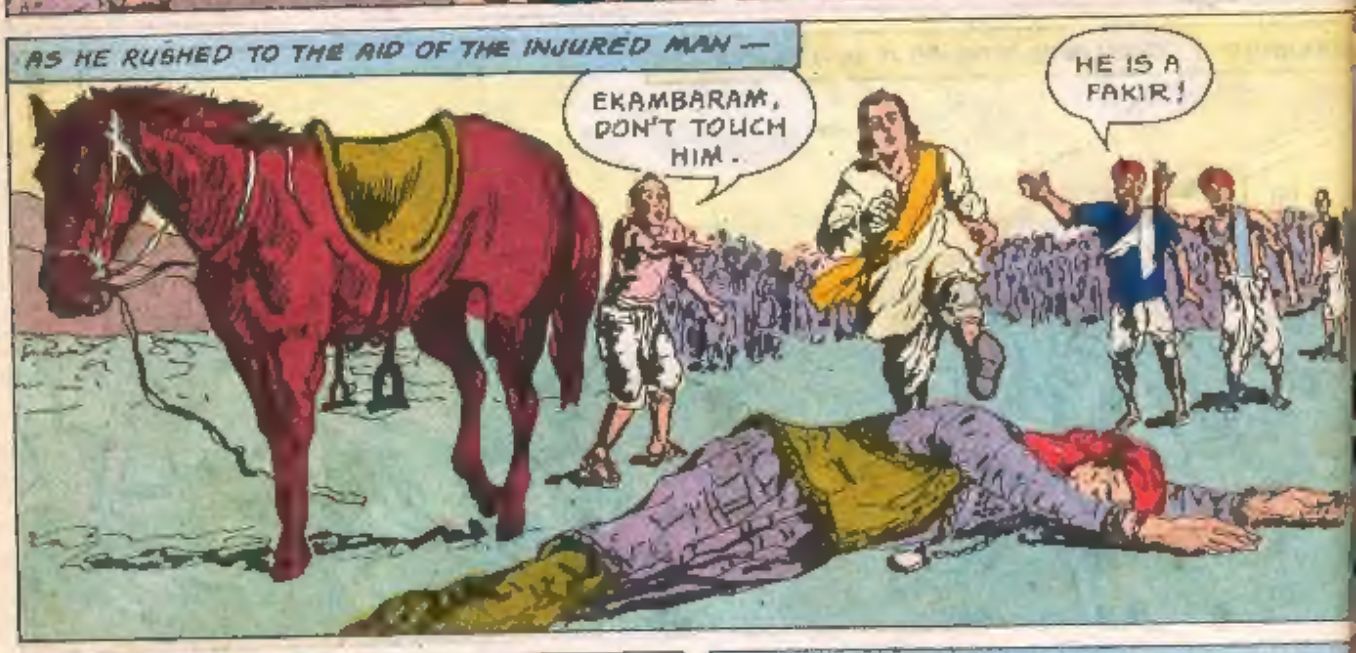
IT WAS ONE OF THOSE UNEVENTFUL EVENINGS AT THE MARKET-PLACE IN SATYAPURI...*

SUDDENLY A HORSEMAN CAME AS IF IN A FRENZY.

* A TOWN IN THE NAWAB'S KINGDOM

HE IS WRITHING IN PAIN.

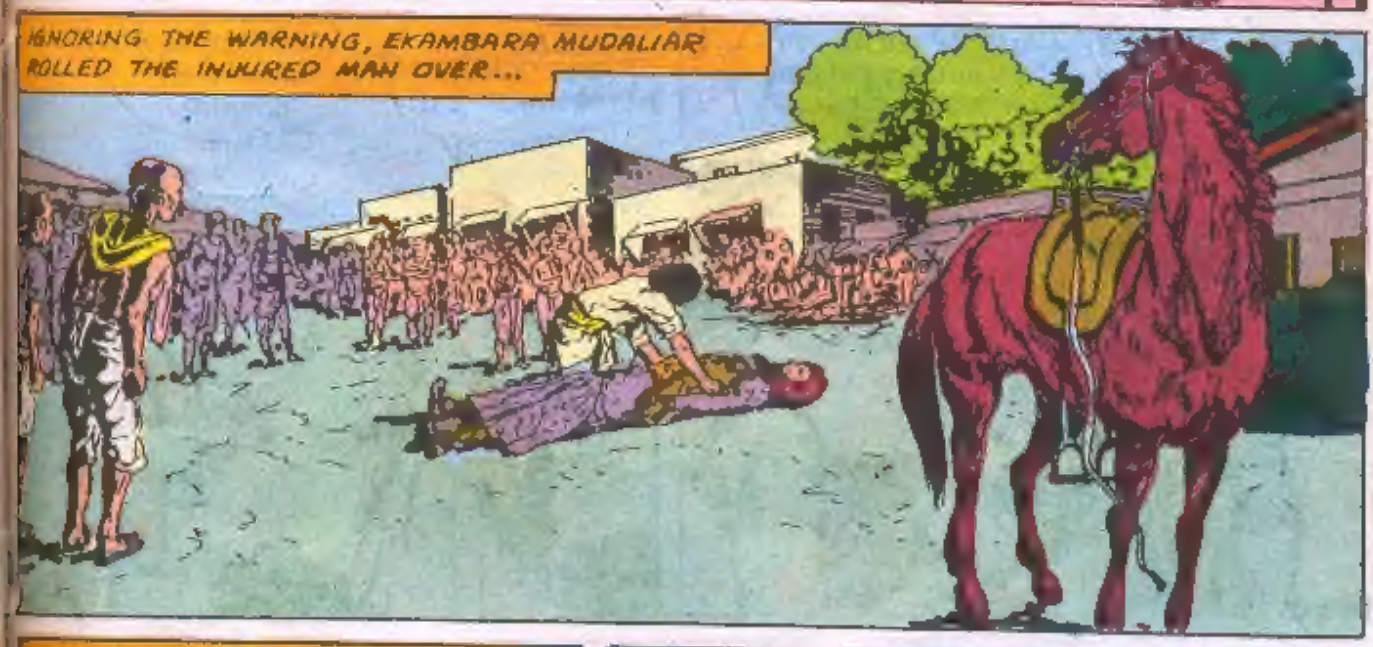
JUST THEN A MAN CAME TO THE MARKET-PLACE.


AS HE RUSHED TO THE AID OF THE INJURED MAN —
EKAMBARAM, DON'T TOUCH HIM.
HE IS A FAKIR!

SO WHAT?
IF YOU TOUCH HIM, YOU WILL BE DEFILED. YOU WILL LOSE YOUR CASTE.

BUT HE SEEMS TO BE IN DANGER OF LOSING SOMETHING GREATER— HIS LIFE.

DON'T TOUCH HIM, I WARN YOU.
IF YOU DO, YOU WILL REGRET IT, EKAMBARAM.

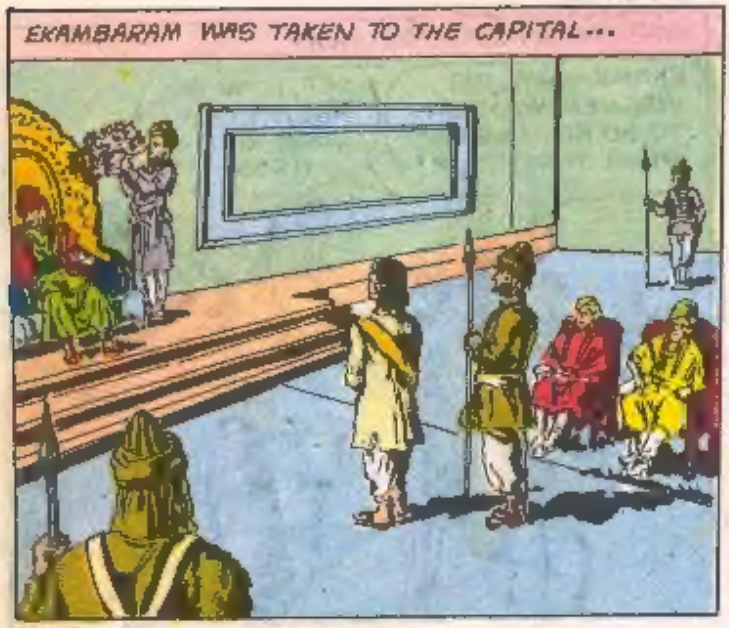

IGNORING THE WARNING, EKAMBARA MUDALIAR ROLLED THE INJURED MAN OVER...

...AND SPRINKLED WATER ON HIS FACE.

HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW?
BETTER.

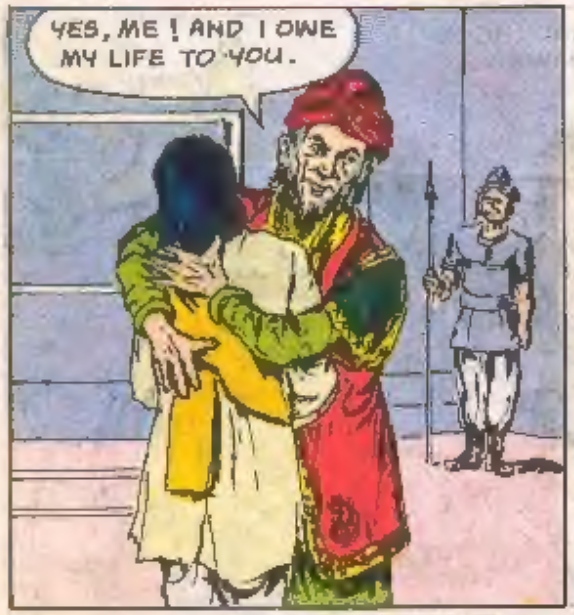
SOON THE FAKIR WAS ON HIS FEET.
THANK YOU. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
NOTHING.
YOU MUST ACCEPT SOME REWARD.
THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP A FELLOW HUMAN BEING IS REWARD ENOUGH.
ALLAH WILL CERTAINLY REWARD YOU.
I DO NOT WISH TO HAVE ANY REWARD.
...NOT EVEN FROM THE ALMIGHTY...

SUCH INSOLENCE, YOU BRAT!
AND THE FAKIR RODE AWAY.
EKAMBARAM, WE WARNED YOU NOT TO GO ANYWHERE NEAR THAT FAKIR!
SEE, HOW HE HAS REPAID YOUR KINDNESS!
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF YOUR TROUBLES.
THE OMINOUS WARNING SEEMED TO PROVE RIGHT. ONE DAY—
YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
ASK THE NAWAB.


EKAMBARAM WAS TAKEN TO THE CAPITAL...

...AND PRODUCED BEFORE THE NAWAB.
HUZOOR, WHAT IS MY...

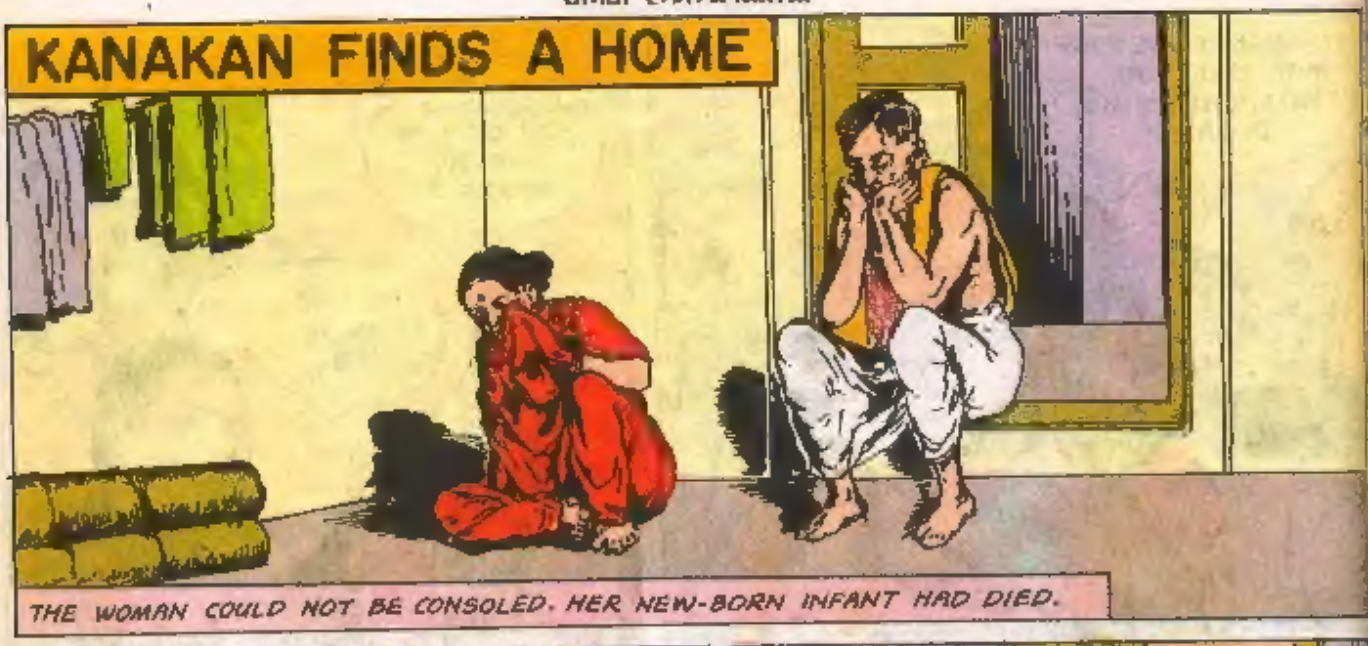
...YOU ?!
THE NAWAB WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE FAKIR
TO LEARN THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN HIS
KINGDOM HE TRAVELLED IN THE DISGUISE OF A FAKI

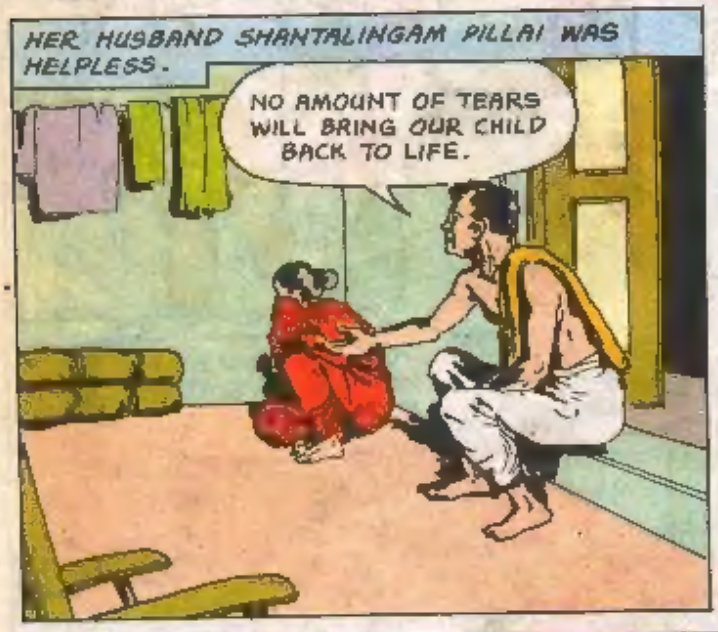

YES, ME ! AND I OWE MY LIFE TO YOU.

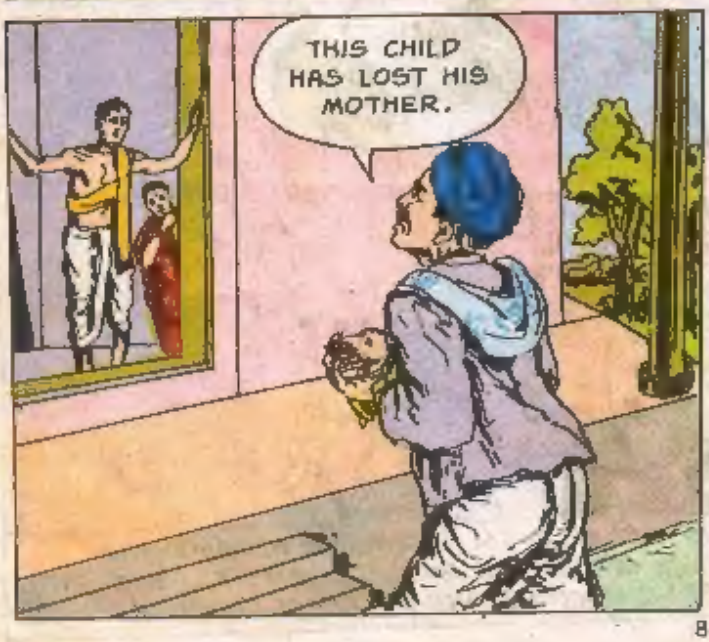
I KNEW YOU WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY REWARD. SO I SENT ARMED MEN TO FETCH YOU HERE.

THUS EKAMBARAM MUDALIAR BECAME THE NAWAB'S DIWAN AND EARNED FAME FOR HIS HONEST, EFFICIENT AND SELFLESS SERVICE.

KANAKAN FINDS A HOME





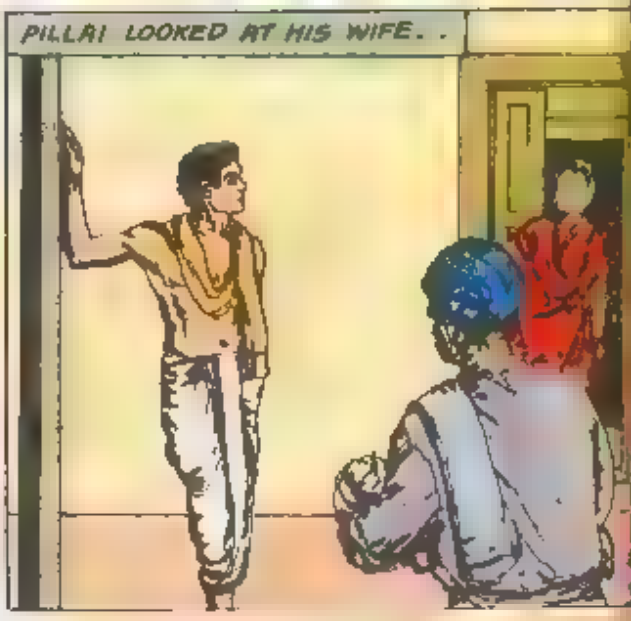


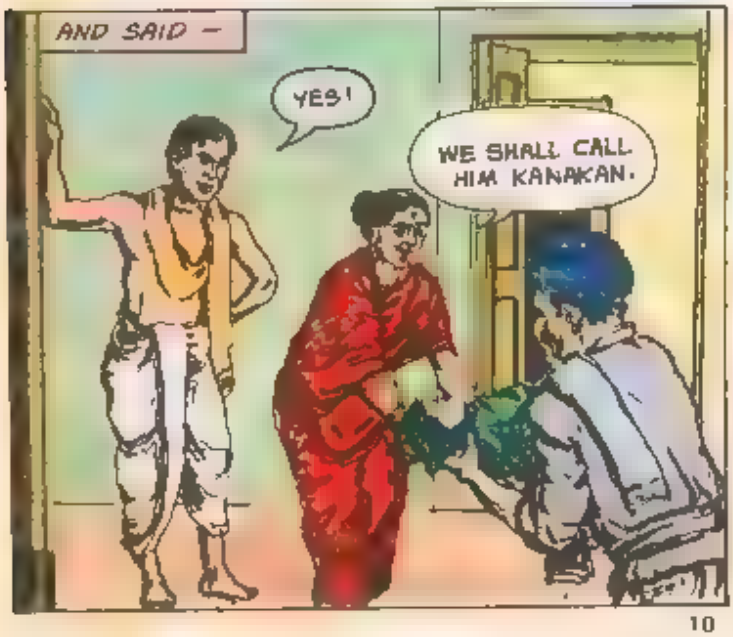
PILLAI'S WIFE LOOKED AT THE INFANT.
AND THE NEXT MOMENT —
MY POOR LITTLE ONE!
AND PILLAI'S WIFE AT ONCE SUCKLED THE BABY HIS HUNGER SATISFIED, THE BABY SNUGGLED UP TO HER.
WHEN THE MAN TRIED TO TAKE HIM AWAY THE CHILD WAILED LOUDLY IN PROTEST
WA WA WA
THE WOMAN GAZED LONGINGLY AT THE INFANT
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE HIM TO US? WE WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM

YOU WILL ?
YES

WELL, I WILL GIVE HIM TO YOU ON ONE CONDITION.

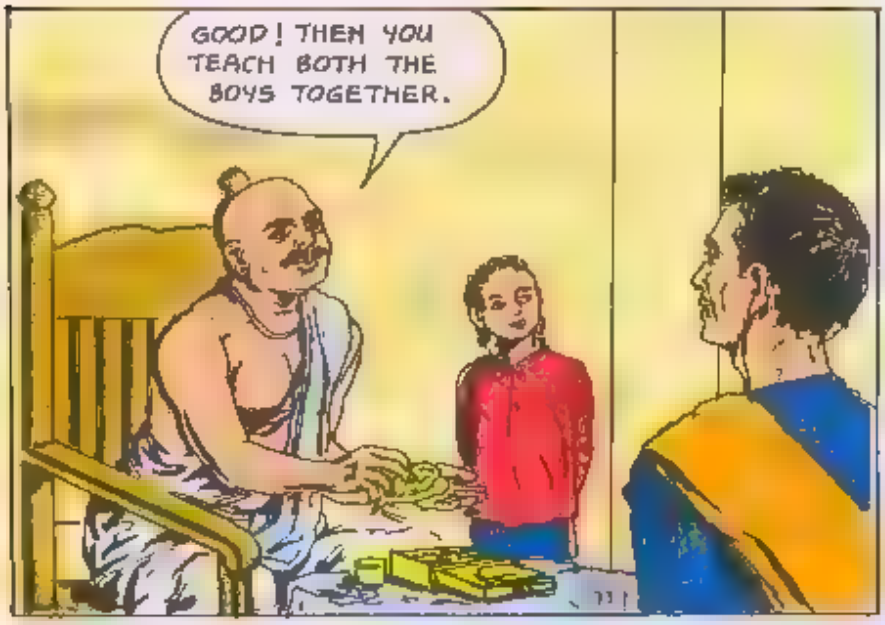
YOU MUST LEAVE TOWN IMMEDIATELY. ARE YOU WILLING TO DO THAT ?

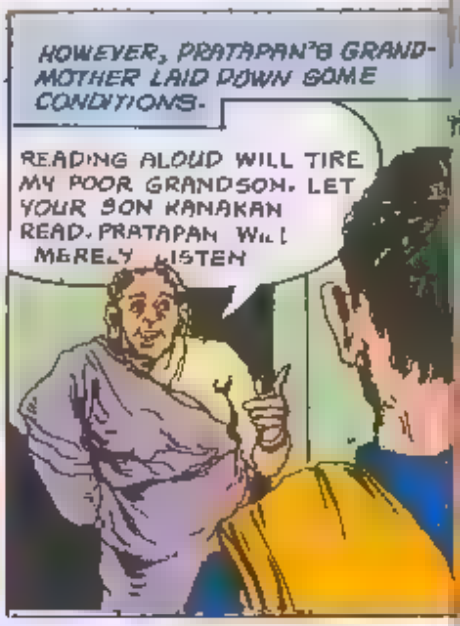

PILLAI LOOKED AT HIS WIFE. .

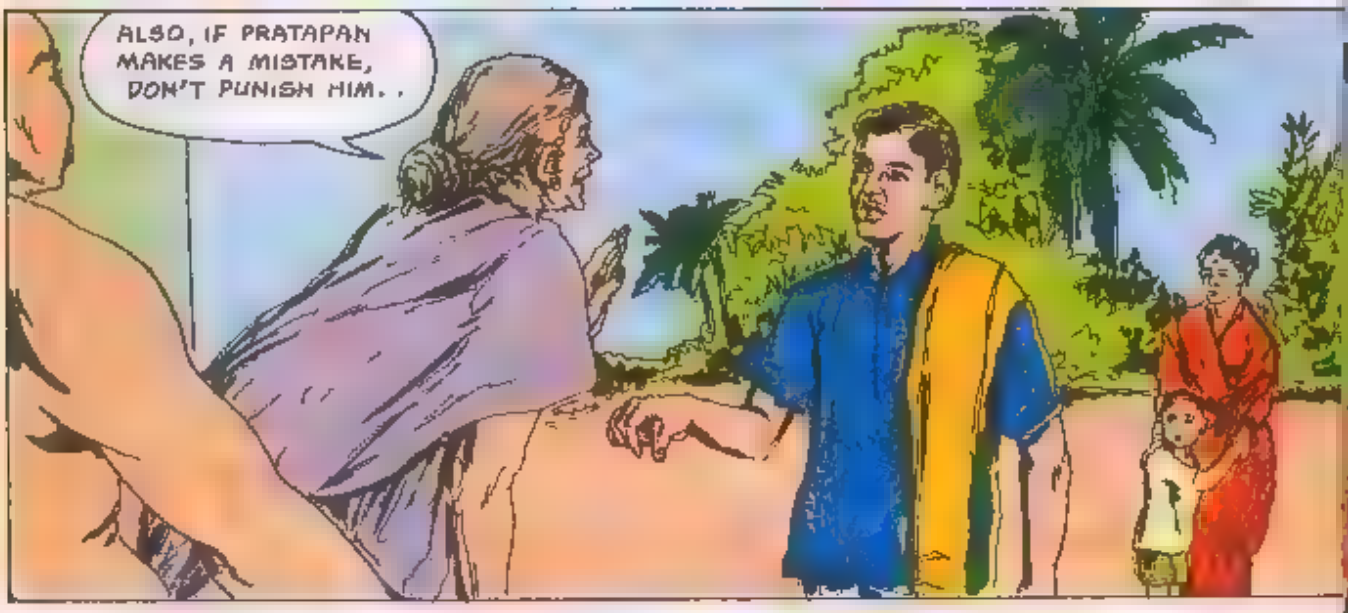

AND SAID –
YES!
WE SHALL CALL HIM KANAKAN.

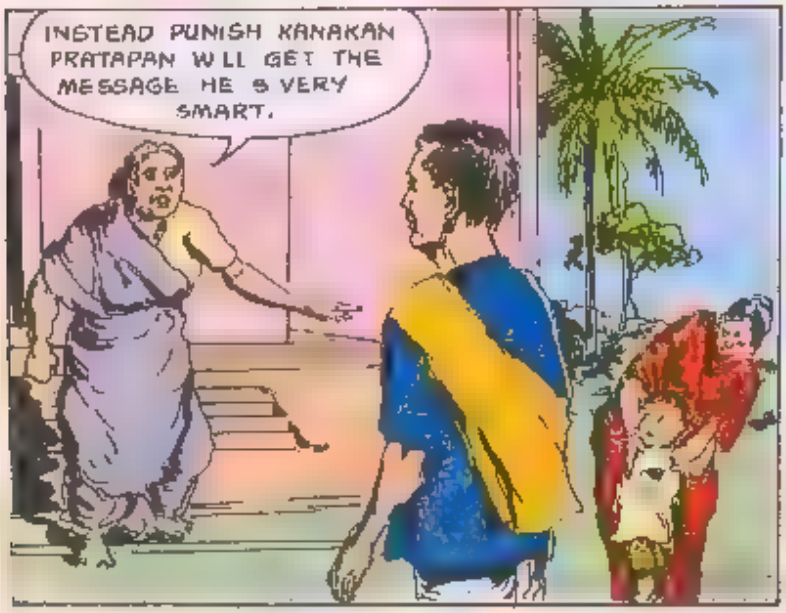
PILLAI LEFT TOWN WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILD THAT VERY NIGHT.
I DON'T THINK THE CHILD BELONGS TO HIM
I DON'T CARE. BELONGS TO US NOW

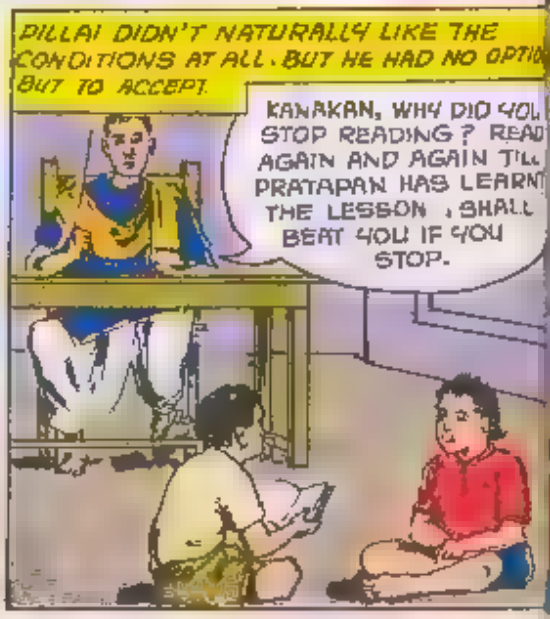
* THE VILLAGE CHIEF


GOOD! THEN YOU TEACH BOTH THE BOYS TOGETHER.

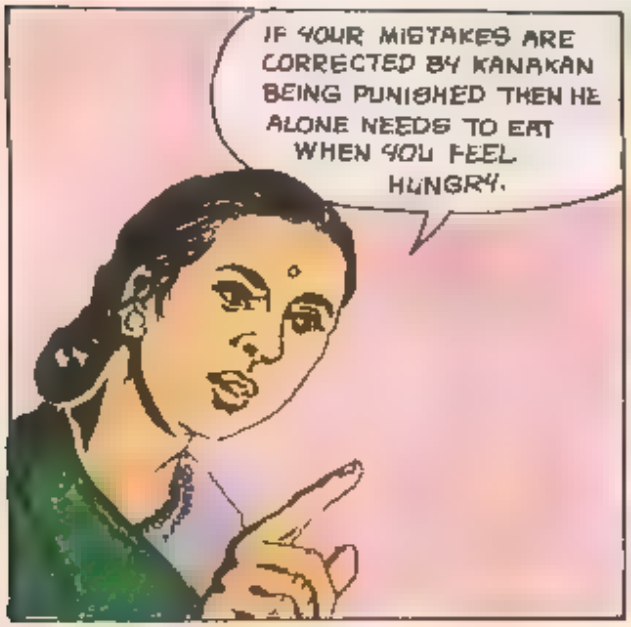

HOWEVER, PRATAPAN'S GRANDMOTHER LAID DOWN SOME CONDITIONS.
READING ALOUD WILL TIRE MY POOR GRANDSON. LET YOUR SON KANAKAN READ. PRATAPAN WILL MERELY LISTEN

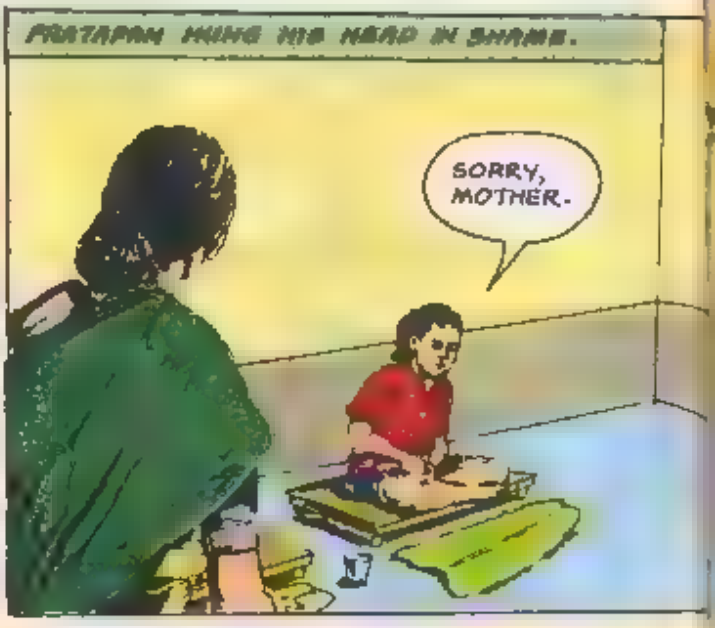

ALSO, IF PRATAPAN MAKES A MISTAKE, DON'T PUNISH HIM..

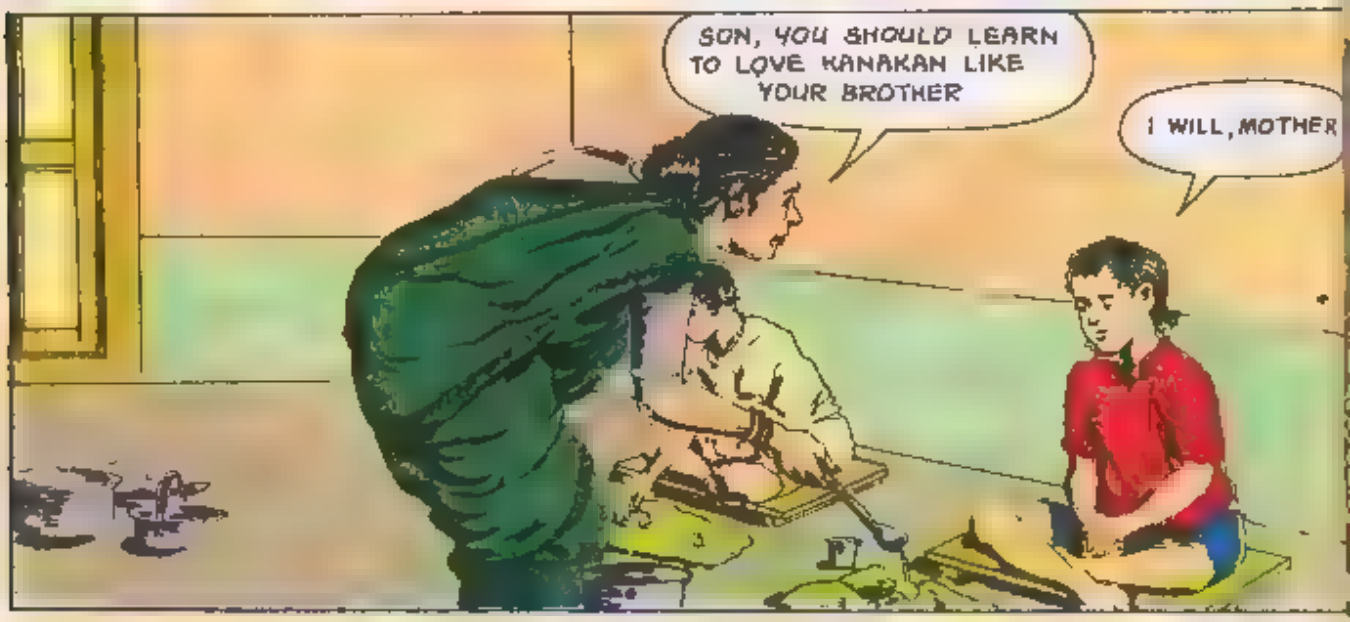

INSTEAD PUNISH KANAKAN PRATAPAN WILL GET THE MESSAGE. HE IS VERY SMART.

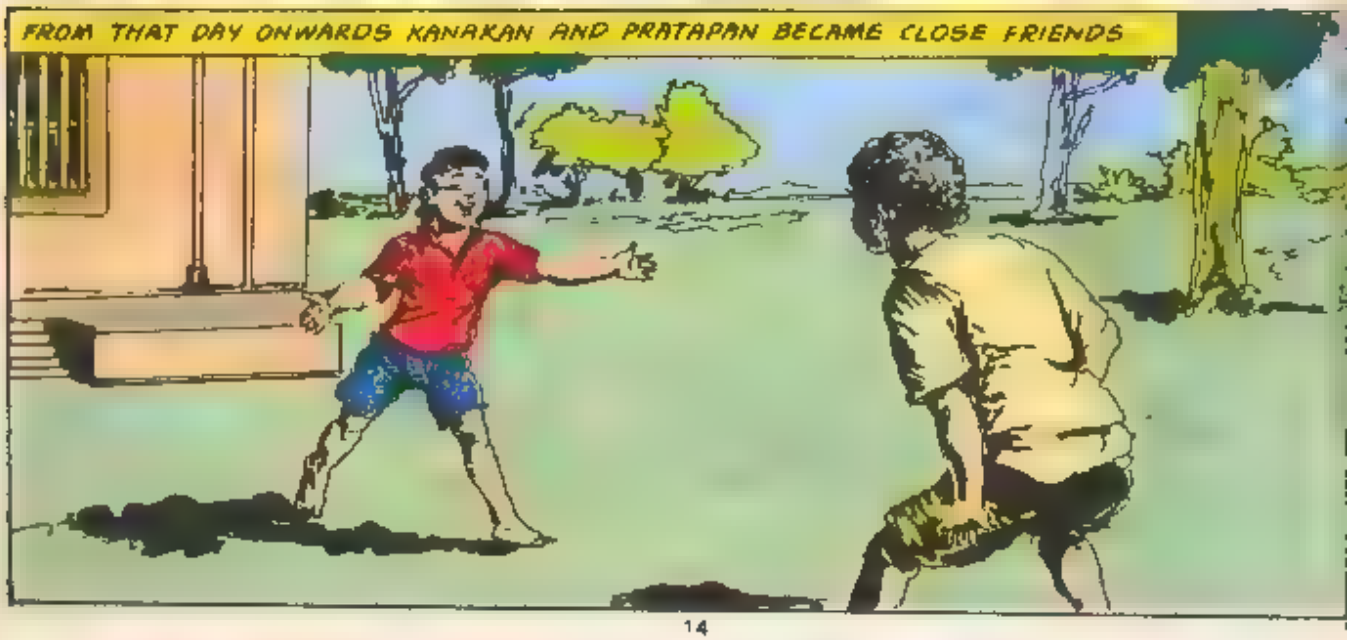

PILLAI DIDN'T NATURALLY LIKE THE CONDITIONS AT ALL. BUT HE HAD NO OPTION BUT TO ACCEPT.
KANAKAN, WHY DID YOU STOP READING? READ AGAIN AND AGAIN TILL PRATAPAN HAS LEARNT THE LESSON. I SHALL BEAT YOU IF YOU STOP.

THUS KANAKAN WAS OFTEN CANED FOR NO FAULT OF HIS. WHEN PRATAPAN'S MOTHER FIRST NOTICED THIS —
PRATAPAN MUST REALISE THAT KANAKAN CANNOT BE PUNISHED FOR HIM
SO ONE AFTERNOON, SHE CALLED BOTH PRATAPAN AND KANAKAN FOR LUNCH.
ALL RIGHT, EAT YOUR FOOD
BUT, MOTHER, YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME ANY FOOD
YOU DON'T NEED TO EAT.
PLEASE, MOTHER, I AM HUNGRY.
THEN JUST KEEP LOOKING AT KANAKAN AS HE EATS
THAT IS NOT GOING TO FILL MY BELLY.


IF YOUR MISTAKES ARE CORRECTED BY KANAKAN BEING PUNISHED THEN HE ALONE NEEDS TO EAT WHEN YOU FEEL HUNGRY.


PRATAPAN HUNG HIS HEAD IN SHAME.
SORRY, MOTHER.


SON, YOU SHOULD LEARN TO LOVE KANAKAN LIKE YOUR BROTHER
I WILL, MOTHER


FROM THAT DAY ONWARDS KANAKAN AND PRATAPAN BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS

A BET

PRATAPAN AND KANAKAN GREW UP AS GOOD FRIENDS ONCE THEY HAD A BET.

CAN YOU DO WITH YOUR EYES OPEN WHAT I CAN WITH MY EYES CLOSED?

YOU BET I CAN!

ALL RIGHT! HERE IS A HANDFUL OF SAND.

.. I WILL THROW IT ON MY FACE .

...WITH MY EYES CLOSED.

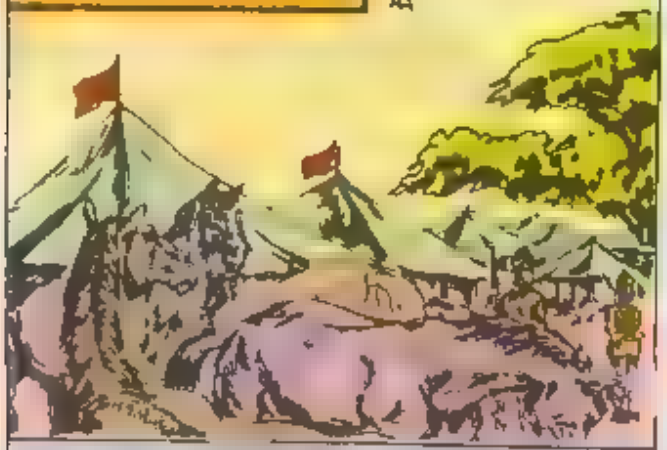
NOW, YOU DO THAT WITH YOUR EYES

NO!

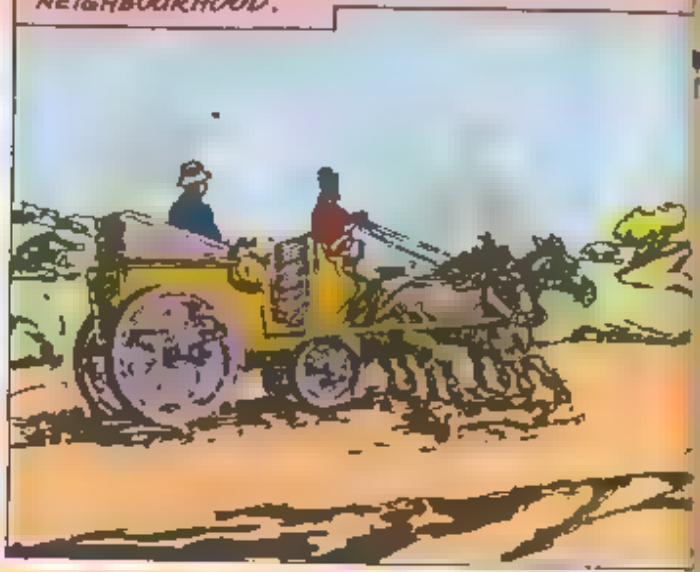
YOU LOSE YOUR BET THEN.

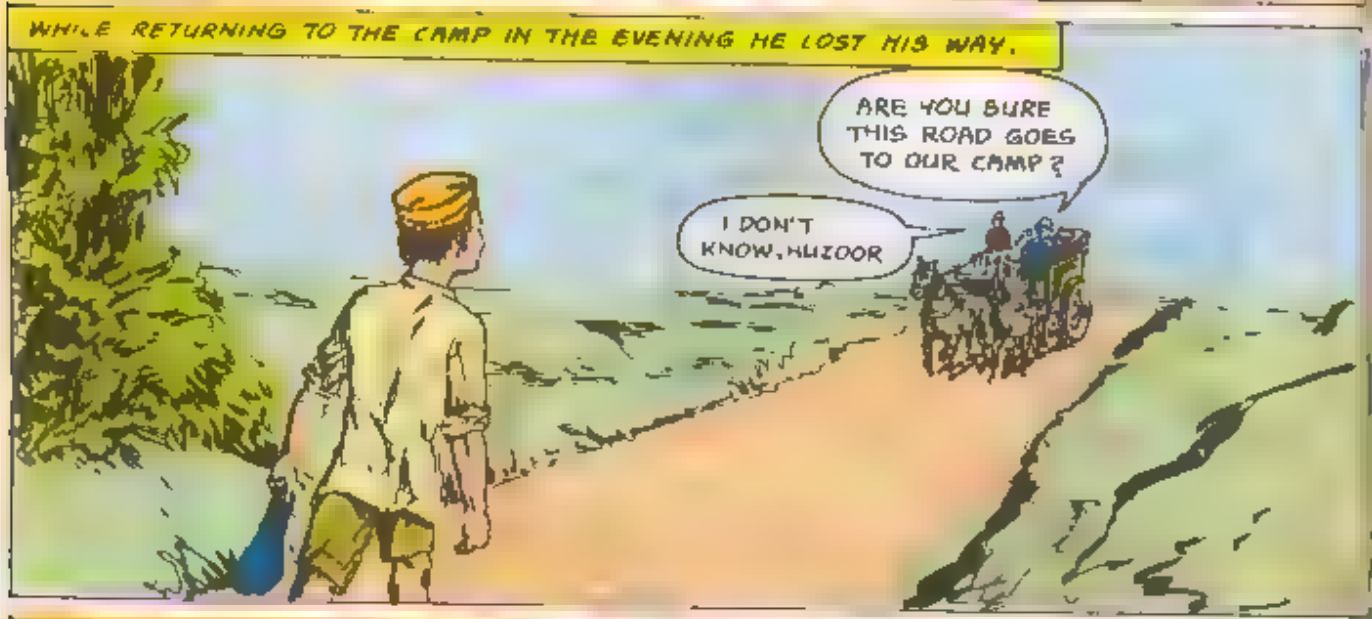
I'D RATHER LOSE MY BET THAN LOSE MY EYES

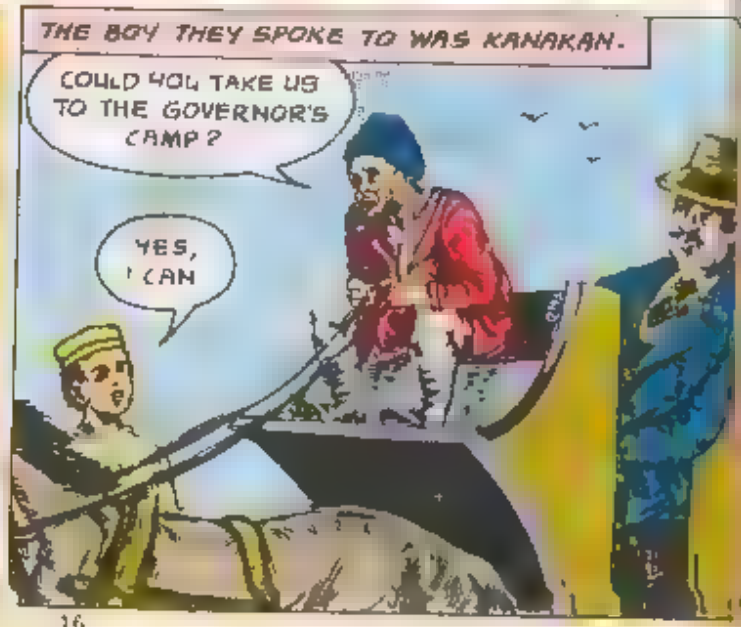
KANAKAN MEETS THE GOVERNOR



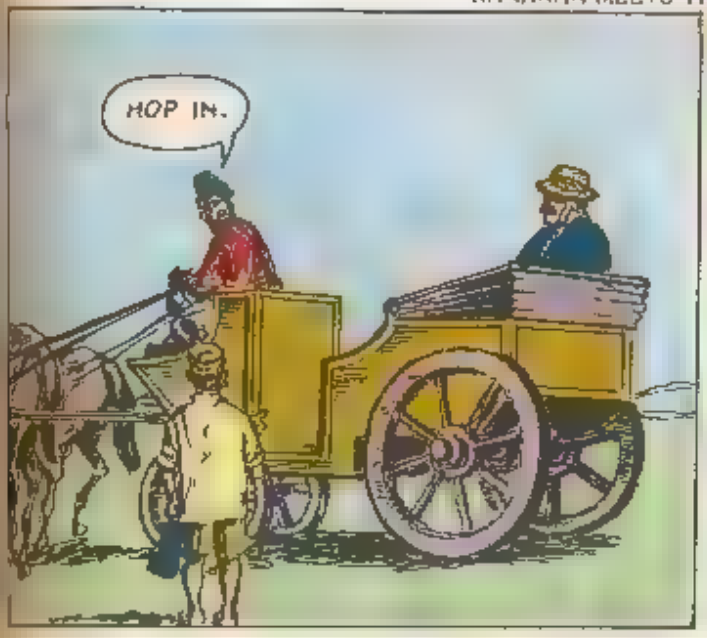
ONCE THE GOVERNOR CAMPED NEAR SATYAPURI

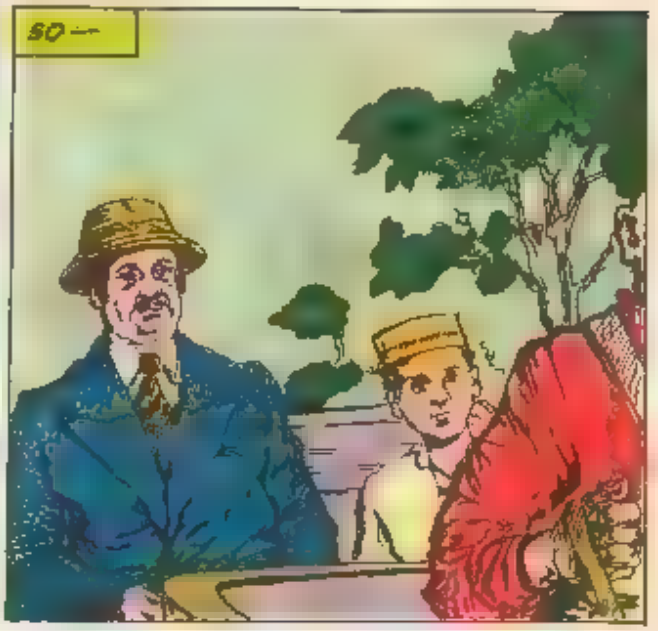


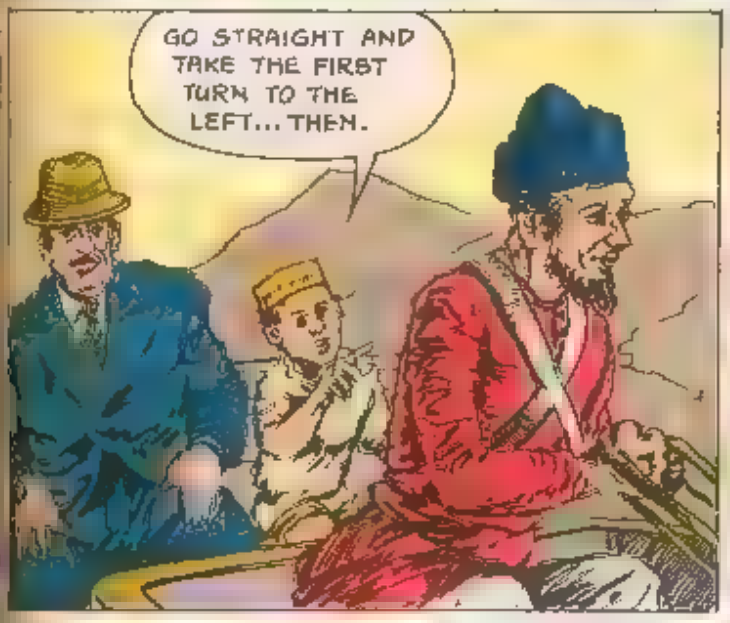


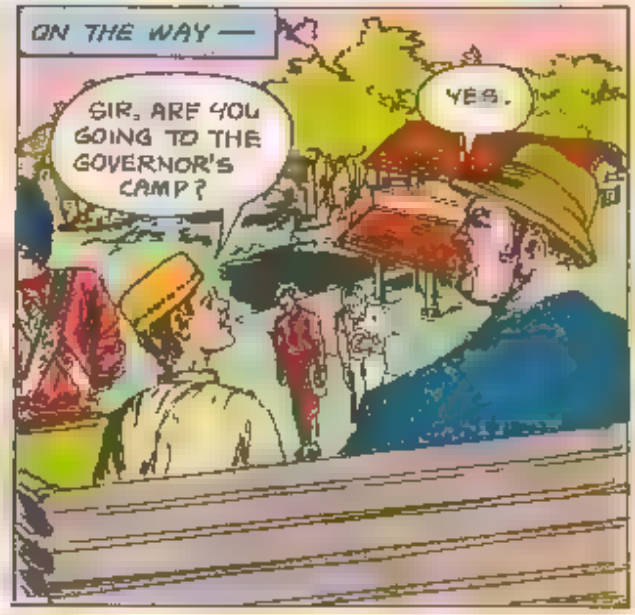


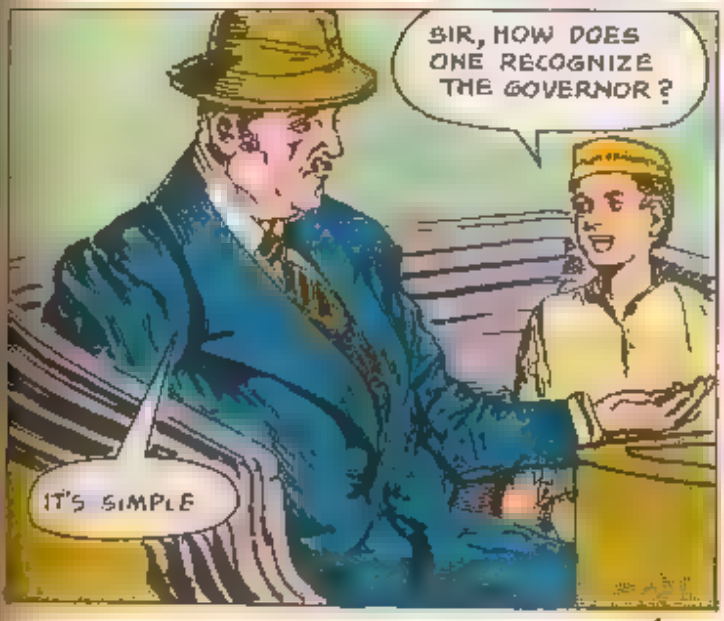
KANAKAN MEETS THE GOVERNOR

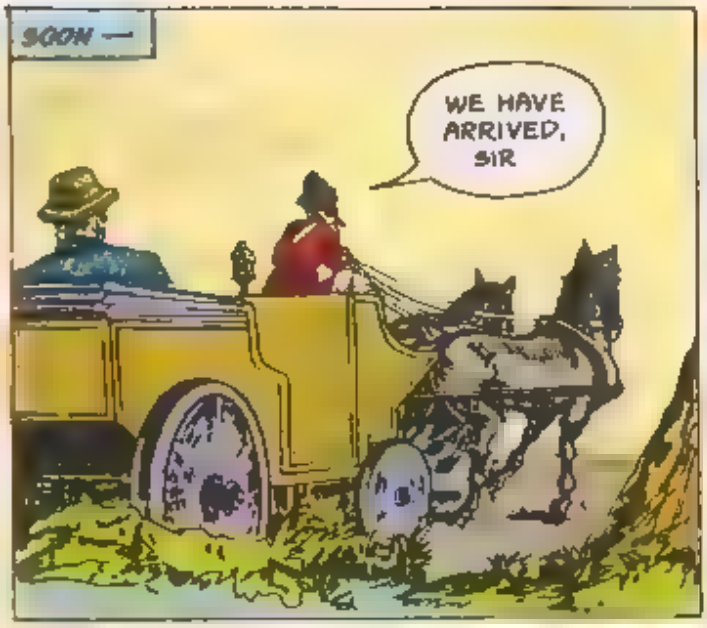


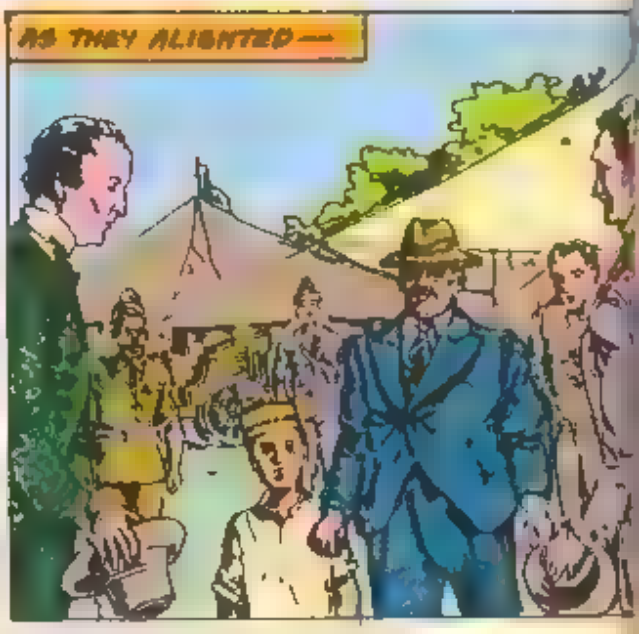


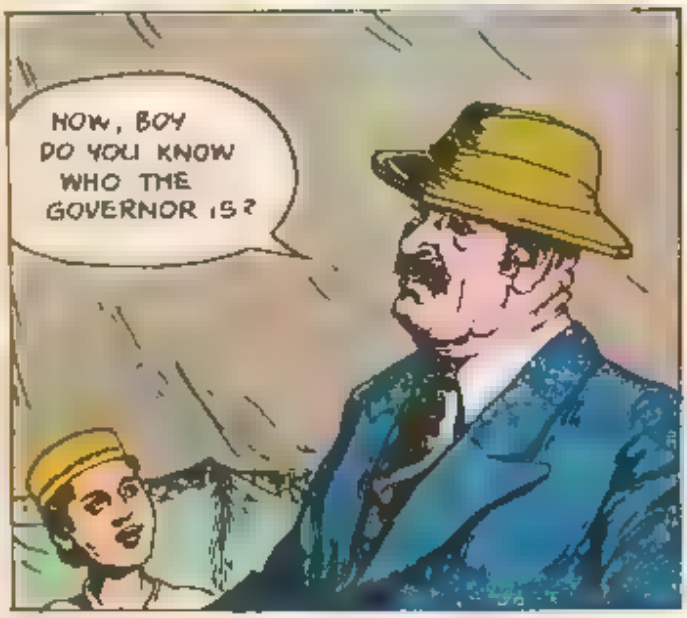






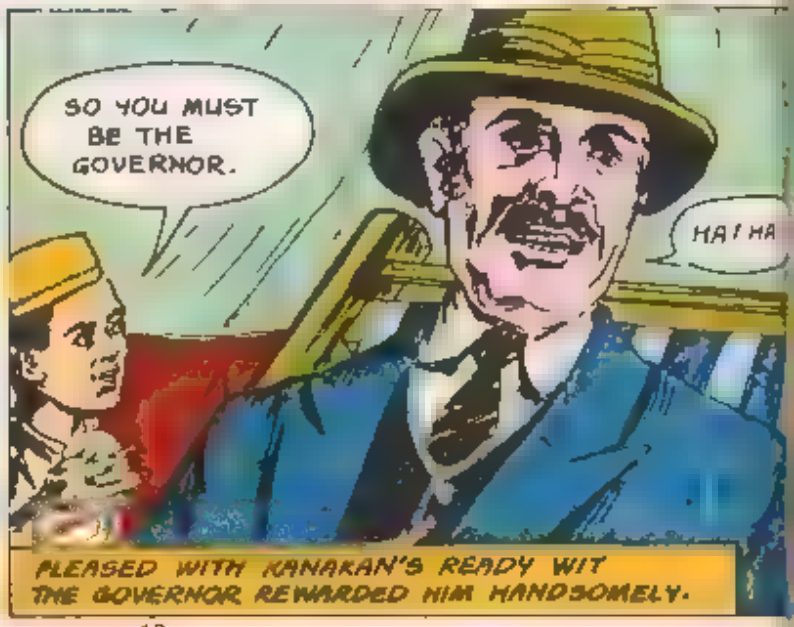

SOON —
WE HAVE ARRIVED, SIR


AS THEY ALIGHTED —


NOW, BOY DO YOU KNOW WHO THE GOVERNOR IS?

ALL HAVE REMOVED THEIR HATS, SIR, EXCEPT THE TWO OF US

I KNOW I AM NOT THE GOVERNOR


SO YOU MUST BE THE GOVERNOR.
HA! HA
PLEASED WITH KANAKAN'S READY WIT THE GOVERNOR REWARDED HIM HANDSOMELY.

THE RACE

JHANAM, THE DAUGHTER OF PRATAPAN'S UNCLE, WOULD OFTEN PLAY WITH THE BOYS.

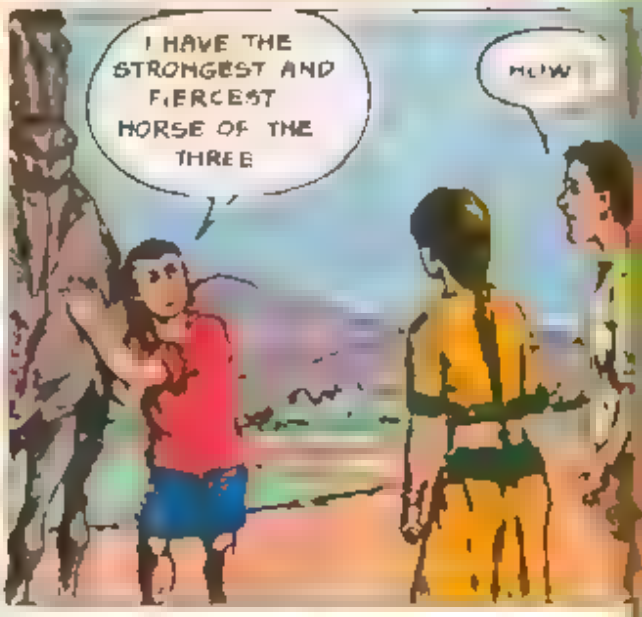
LET'S HAVE A RACE.

YES. THAT WILL BE FUN.

ONE... TWO .. THREE..

OFF!

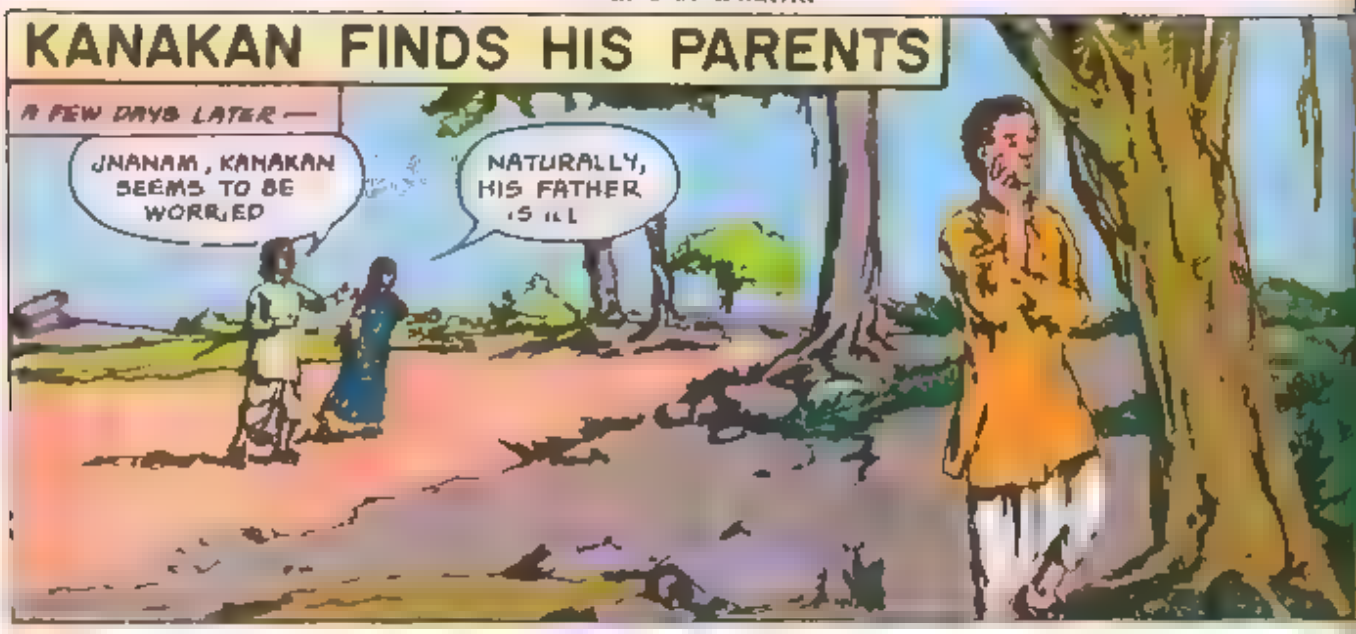
PRATAPAN WAS THE LAST ONE TO REACH THE FINISH

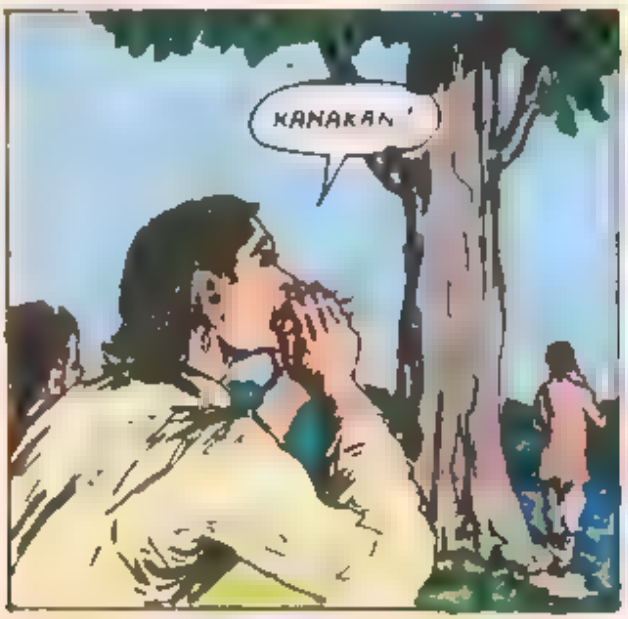

I HAVE THE STRONGEST AND FIERCEST HORSE OF THE THREE
HOW!

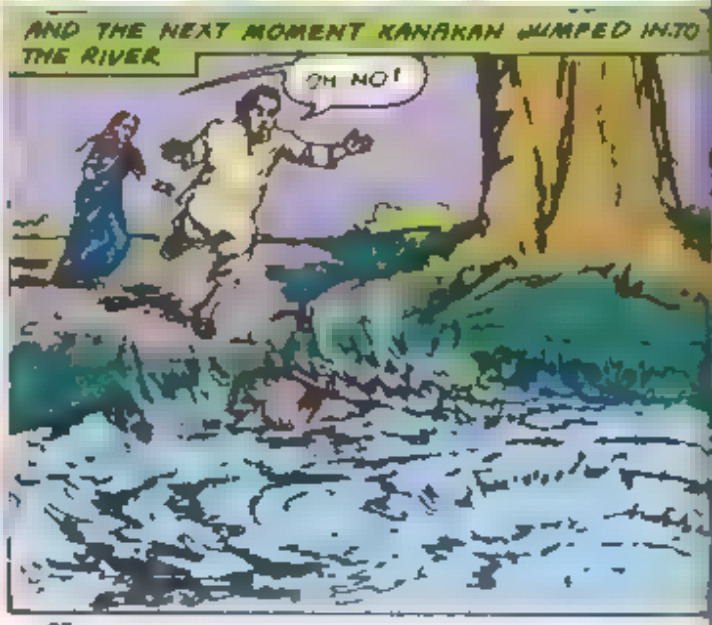
IT FRIGHTENED YOUR HORSES INTO RUNNING FASTER, DIDN'T IT?
HA! HA!

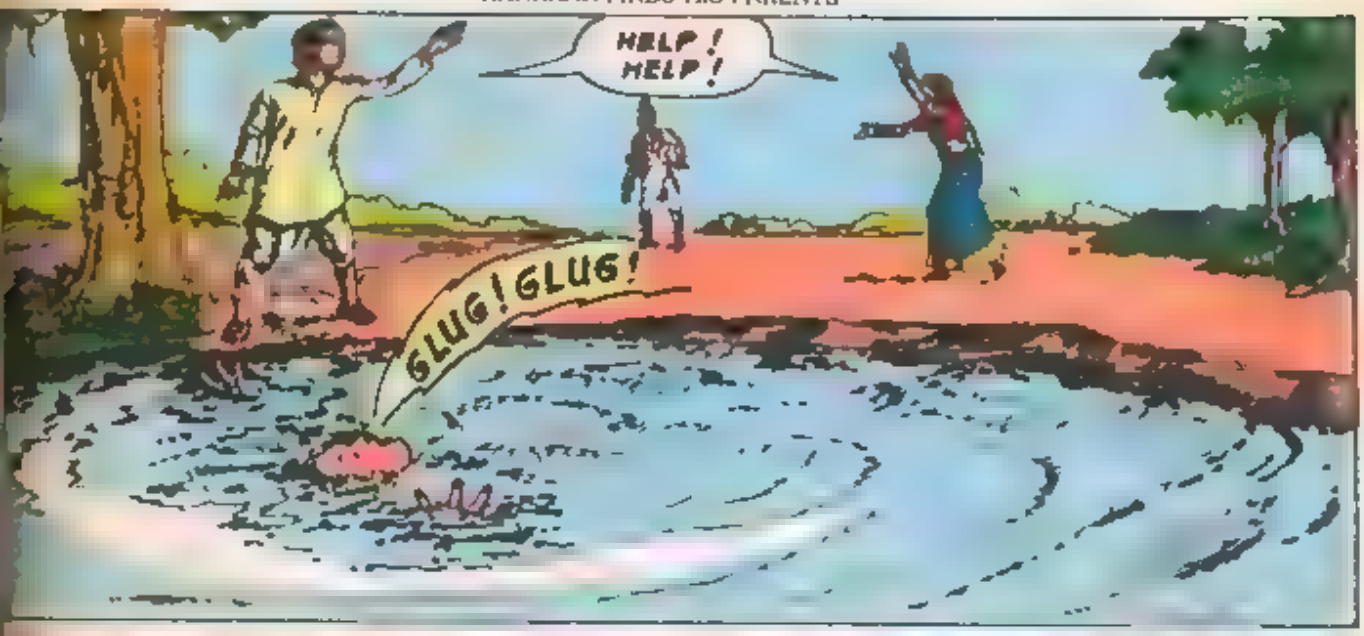
HIGHER MATHS
ON ONE OCCASION, PRATAPAN TRIED TO ACT SMART
HOW MANY FRUITS DO WE HAVE, KANAKAN?
TWO!
NO! WE HAVE THREE
THREE?
YES COUNT THEM
ONE
-AND TWO -
MAKE THREE
ALL RIGHT, KANAKAN, YOU EAT THE FIRST FRUIT
I WILL HAVE THE SECOND.
NANAM!
AND YOU HAVE THE THIRD FRUIT, PRATAPAN
HA! HA!

KANAKAN FINDS HIS PARENTS

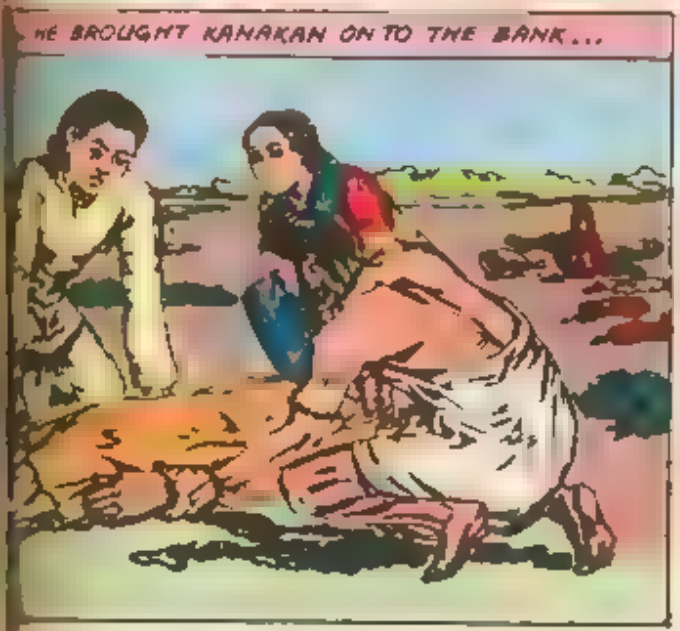


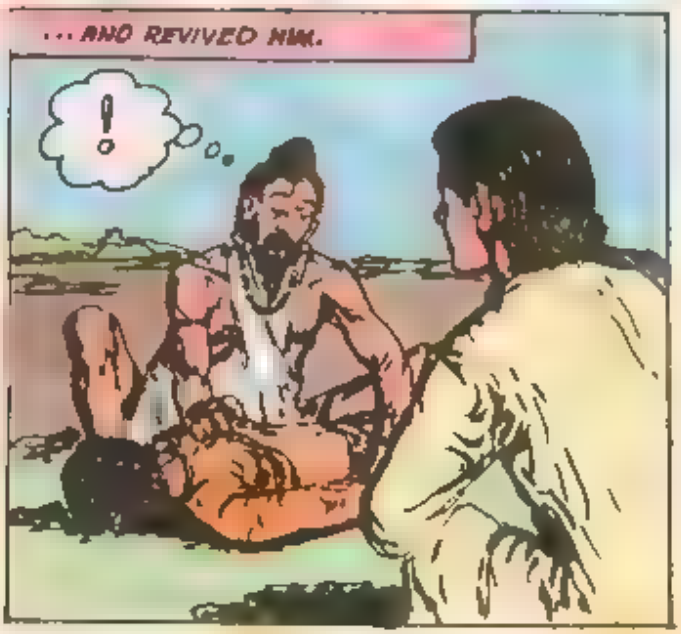


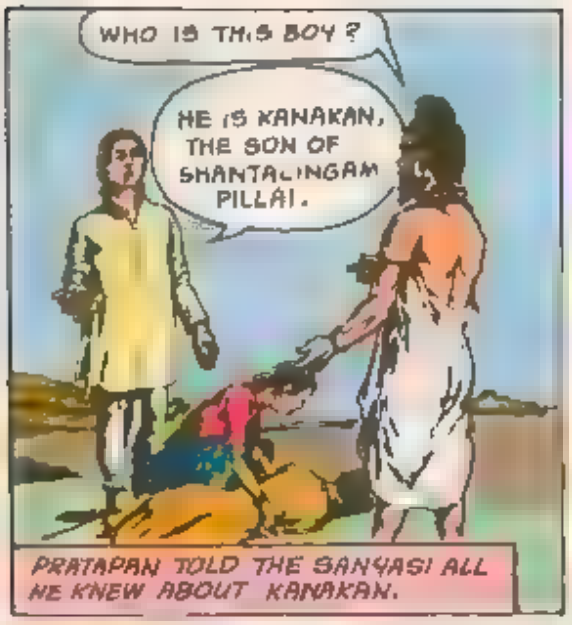


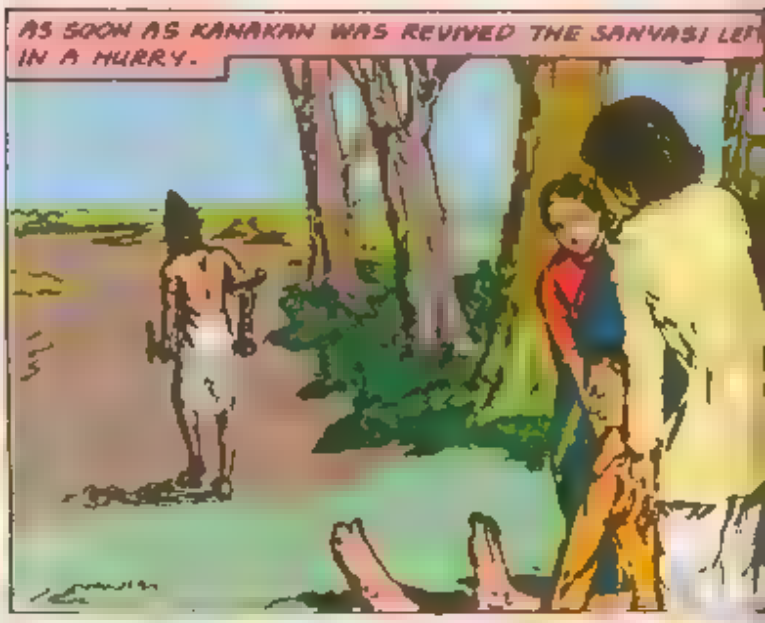

HELP! HELP!
GLUG! GLUG!

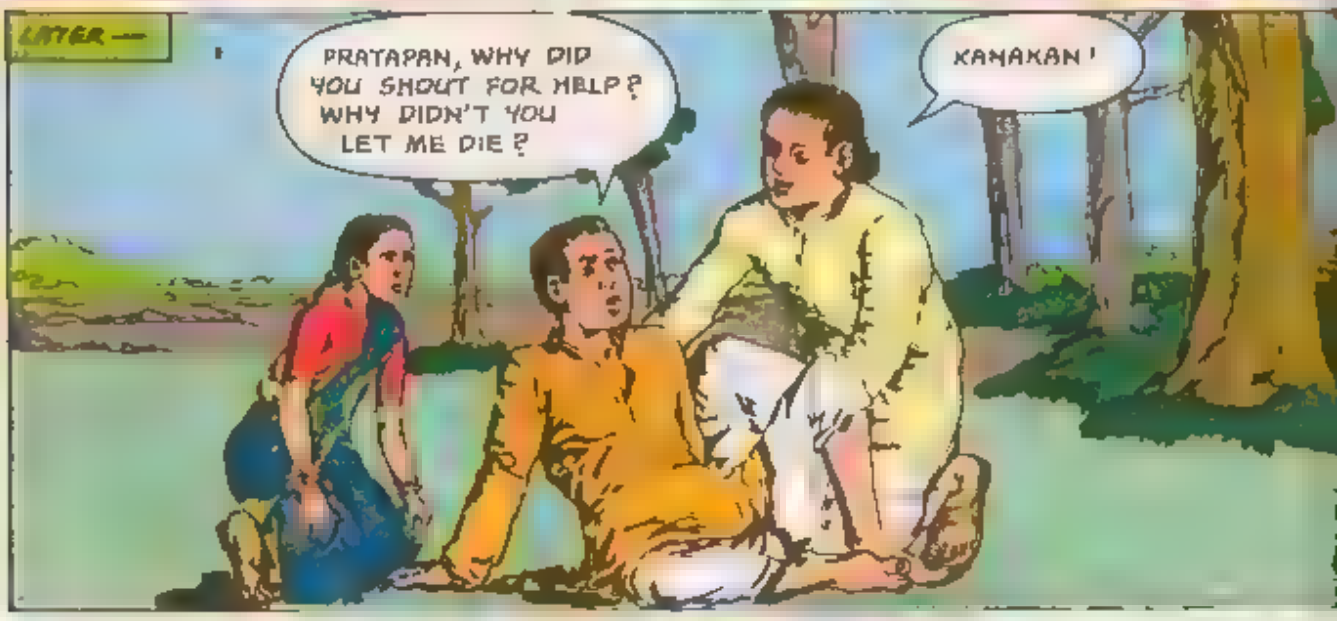
HEARING THEIR CRIES AN ASCETIC RUSHED TO THEIR AID..


HE BROUGHT KANAKAN ON TO THE BANK...


...AND REVIVED HIM.
!


WHO IS THIS BOY ?
HE IS KANAKAN, THE SON OF SHANTALINGAM PILLAI.
PRATAPAN TOLD THE SANYASI ALL HE KNEW ABOUT KANAKAN.


AS SOON AS KANAKAN WAS REVIVED THE SANYASI LEFT IN A HURRY.


LATER —
PRATAPAN, WHY DID YOU SHOUT FOR HELP ? WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME DIE ?
KANAKAN !

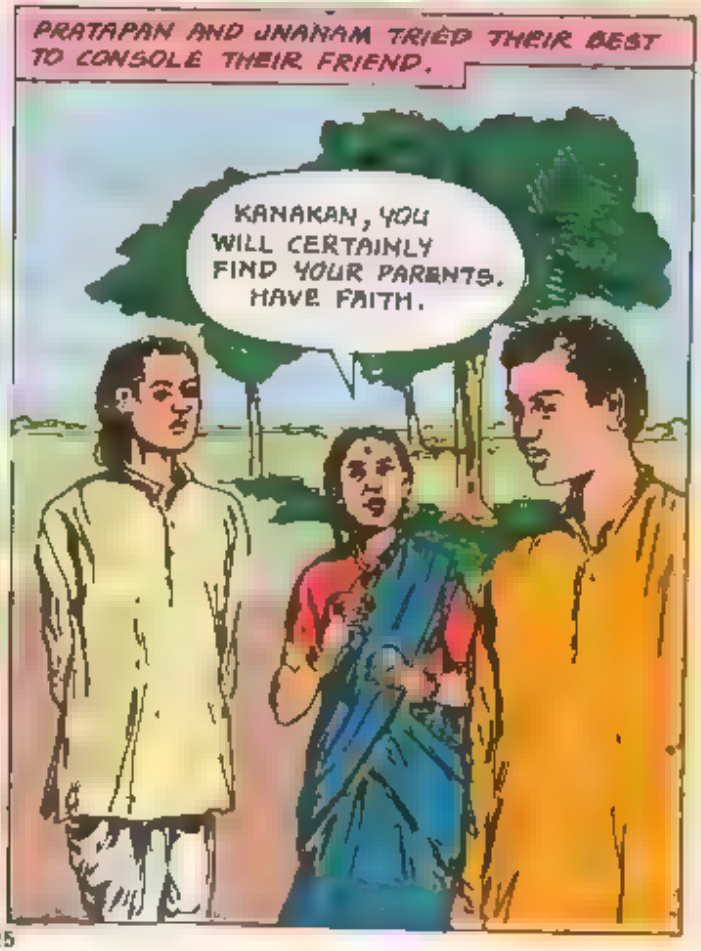
HAD YOU DIED, HOW WOULD WE HAVE FACED YOUR FATHER ?
MY FATHER ! I DON T HAVE A FATHER.

I DON T KNOW WHO MY FATHER IS !
KANAKAN !

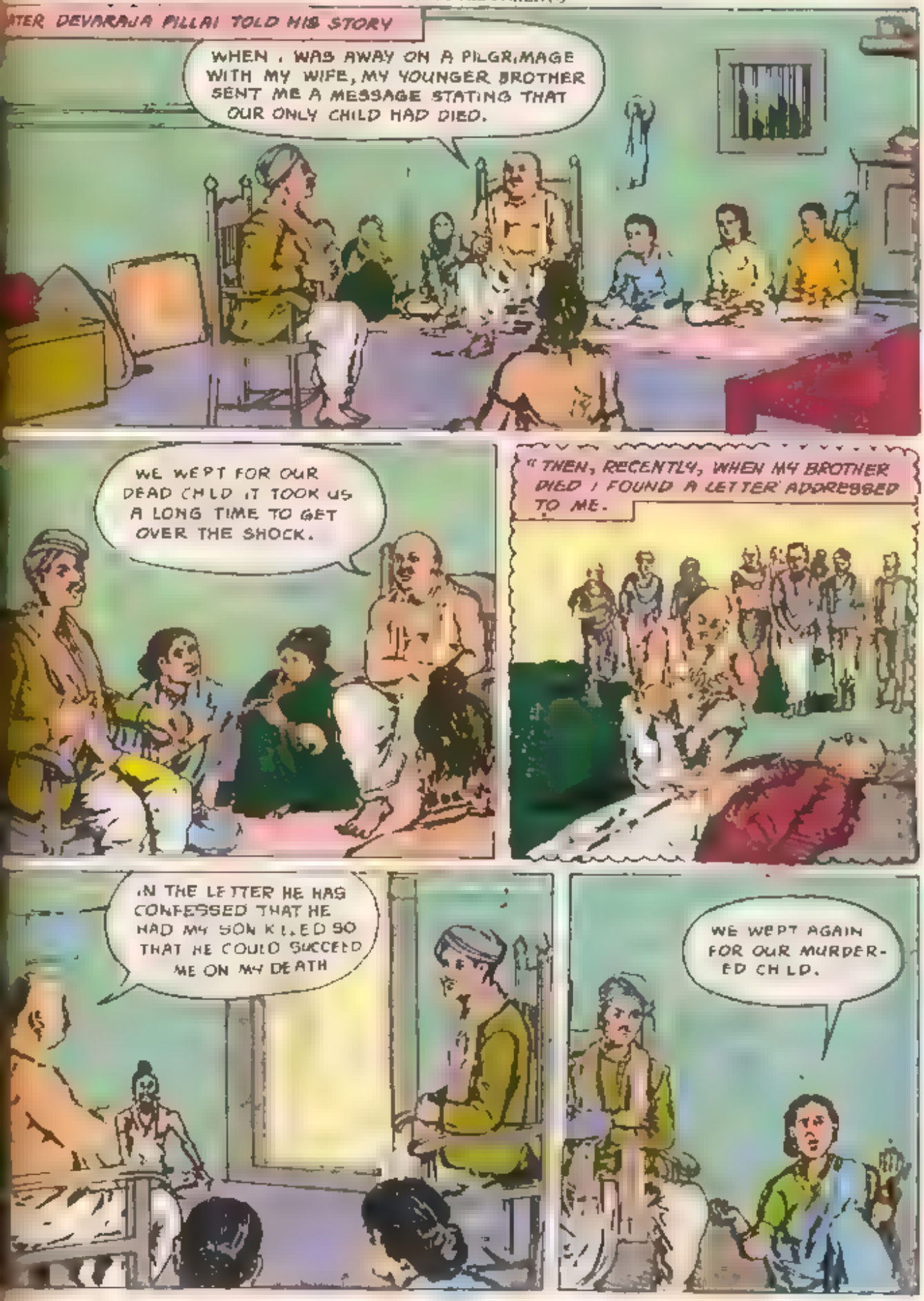
YOU ARE SHOCKED. SO WAS I WHEN THE MAN I LOOK UPON AS MY FATHER TOLD ME WHEN HE WAS ILL.

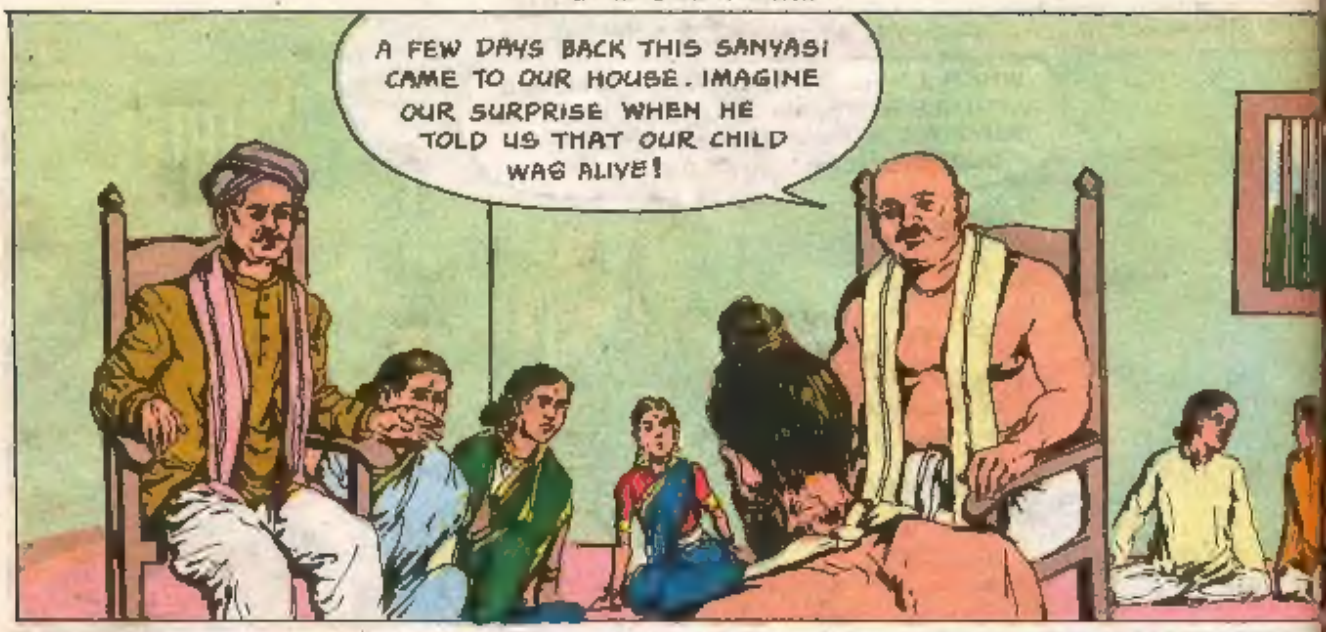
KANAKAN BROKE INTO TEARS.
CAN ANYONE BE MORE UNFORTUNATE THAN THE ONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHO HIS PARENTS ARE ?

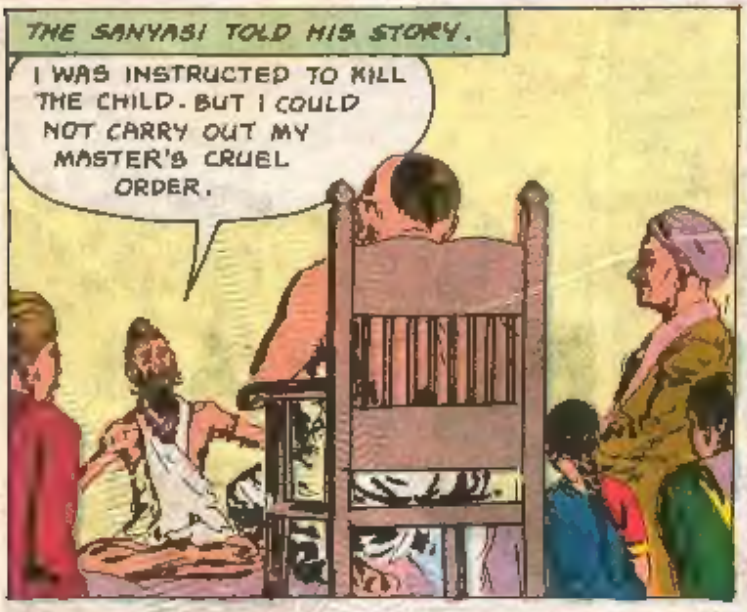
AND TO THINK THAT THERE ARE PARENTS WHO ABANDON THEIR OWN CHILD ?


PRATAPAN AND JNANAM TRIED THEIR BEST TO CONSOLE THEIR FRIEND.
KANAKAN, YOU WILL CERTAINLY FIND YOUR PARENTS. HAVE FAITH.

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, A PRABHU CAME TO THE VILLAGE WITH A LARGE RETINUE.
HE WENT STRAIGHT TO MUDALIARS HOUSE.
ARE YOU KANAKAN ?
YES
MY SON!
!
AT LAST, WE FOUND YOU!
HEARING THE COMMOTION, KANAKACHALA MUDALIAR CAME OUT.
MAY I KNOW WHAT THE COMMOTION IS ABOUT?

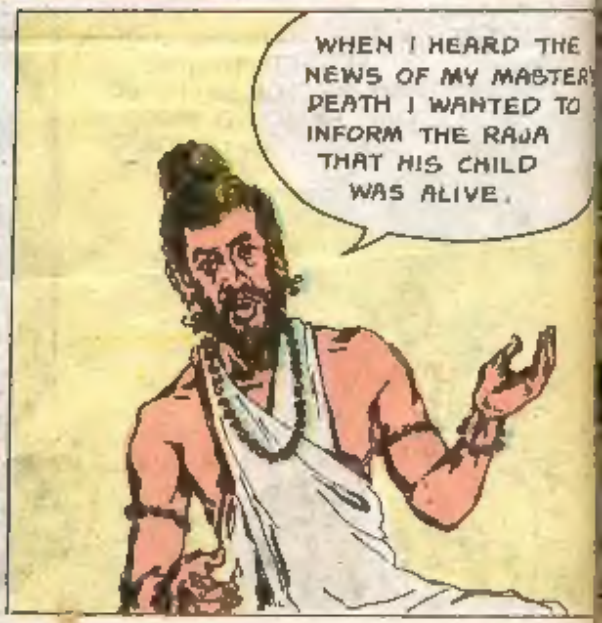

ATER DEVARAJA PILLAI TOLD HIS STORY
WHEN I WAS AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE WITH MY WIFE, MY YOUNGER BROTHER SENT ME A MESSAGE STATING THAT OUR ONLY CHILD HAD DIED.
WE WEPT FOR OUR DEAD CHILD IT TOOK US A LONG TIME TO GET OVER THE SHOCK.
"THEN, RECENTLY, WHEN MY BROTHER DIED I FOUND A LETTER ADDRESSED TO ME.
IN THE LETTER HE HAS CONFESSED THAT HE HAD MY SON KILLED SO THAT HE COULD SUCCEED ME ON MY DEATH
WE WEPT AGAIN FOR OUR MURDERED CHILD.

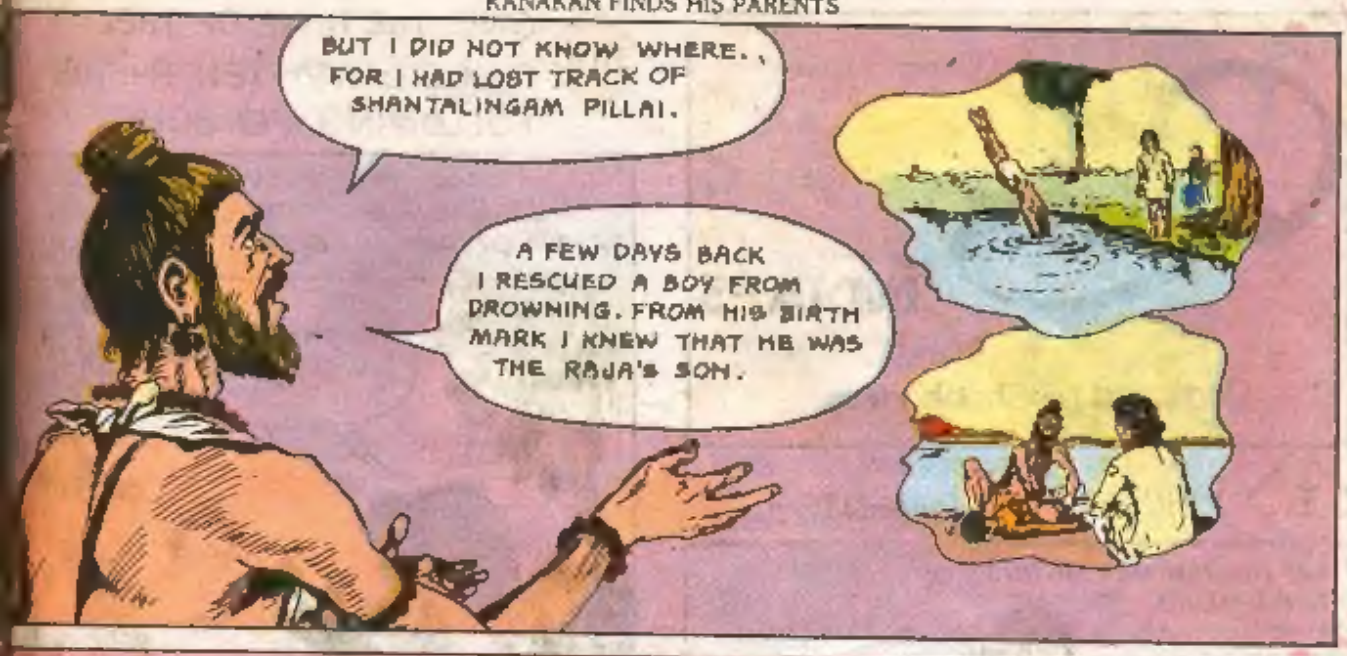

A FEW DAYS BACK THIS SANYASI CAME TO OUR HOUSE. IMAGINE OUR SURPRISE WHEN HE TOLD US THAT OUR CHILD WAS ALIVE!

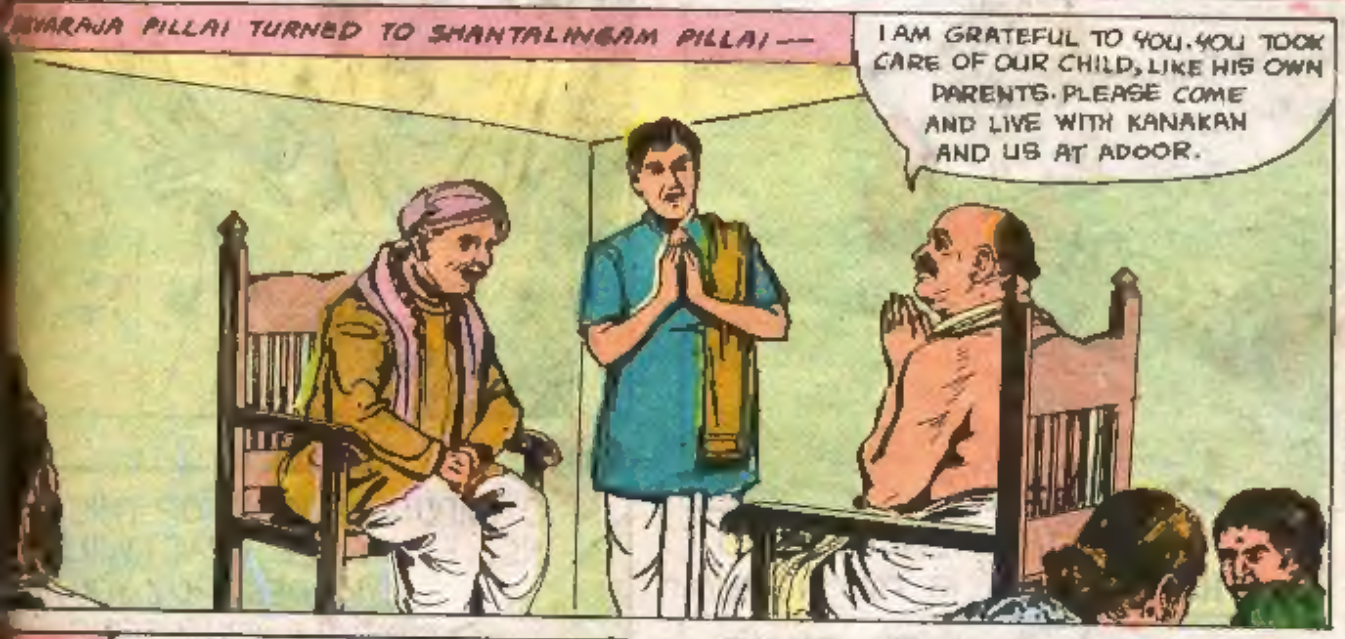

THE SANYASI TOLD HIS STORY.
I WAS INSTRUCTED TO KILL THE CHILD. BUT I COULD NOT CARRY OUT MY MASTER'S CRUEL ORDER.

" SO I GAVE THE CHILD TO SHANTALINGAM PILLAI...

...AND LEFT THE VILLAGE.


WHEN I HEARD THE NEWS OF MY MASTER'S DEATH I WANTED TO INFORM THE RAJA THAT HIS CHILD WAS ALIVE.


BUT I DID NOT KNOW WHERE., FOR I HAD LOST TRACK OF SHANTALINGAM PILLAI.
A FEW DAYS BACK I RESCUED A BOY FROM DROWNING. FROM HIS BIRTH MARK I KNEW THAT HE WAS THE RAJA'S SON.


VARAJA PILLAI TURNED TO SHANTALINGAM PILLAI —
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU. YOU TOOK CARE OF OUR CHILD, LIKE HIS OWN PARENTS. PLEASE COME AND LIVE WITH KANAKAN AND US AT ADOOR.

TER —
SO KANAKAN, YOU HAVE FOUND YOUR PARENTS.
YES. I AM SO HAPPY.

BUT I AM ALSO SAD THAT I WILL HAVE TO PART COMPANY WITH YOU.
DON'T CRY, KANAKAN. WE WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

Quiz

INDIA–3

Compiled by: Shobha Rao

I. WHO ARE HIS PARENTS?

II. IDENTIFY THE PRINCESS AND THE SAGE SHE IS TALKING ABOUT.

IIIa GIVE THE NAME OF THE CLASSIC WRITTEN BY THE FOLLOWING PERSONS.

IIIb

WHAT IS THE MAJOR MISTAKE IN THIS ILLUSTRATION ?

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